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Dated: August 26, 2010
Electronic Signature for Natalie S. Richer: /Natalie S. Richer/

Docket No.: SONYJP 3.0-093
(PATENT)

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Patent Application of: :
Inoue et al. :
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Application No.: 09/466,279 : Group Art Unit: 2424
 :
Filed: December 17, 1999 : Examiner: R. M. Brown
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For: RECEIVING SYSTEM FOR DIGITAL :
BROADCASTING AND RECEIVING :
APPARATUS FOR DIGITAL :
BROADCASTING :
:

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

RESPONSE

In response to the Official Action mailed
May 26, 2010, Applicants submit the following remarks.

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (previously presented) A receiving apparatus for receiving a digital broadcast which comprises a transport stream in which video data and audio data have been compressed and multiplexed, comprising:

a decoder for decoding the transport stream;

a digital interface for mutually transmitting the decoded transport stream to and receiving the decoded transport stream from digital signal processing devices; and

a register for selecting a predetermined number of devices from among a plurality of digital signal processing devices connected to said digital interface and for allocating unique node identification numbers to said selected devices, for each of said selected devices, said register storing a record of said selected device and said unique node identification number allocated to said selected device, and maintaining said record regardless of whether said selected device remains connected to said digital interface.

2. (canceled)

3. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said register confirms whether a device connected to said digital interface has already been allocated a unique node identification number when said device is connected to said digital interface.

4. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said register automatically allocates the same unique node identification numbers to said selected devices when said selected devices are re-connected to said digital interface.

5. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said records stored in said register may be changed by user input.

6. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein, when said unique node identification numbers have previously been allocated to said predetermined number of devices, said register prohibits cancellation of said records stored in said register.

7. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a display processing circuit for displaying a list of digital signal processing devices connected to said digital interface.

8. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 7, wherein said display processing circuit is operable to visually discriminate between selected devices connected to said digital interface and selected devices not connected to said digital interface.

9. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 7, wherein, when an operation is performed to change said record of a device in which a program recording reservation has been set, said display processing circuit generates a predetermined warning display.

10. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising display means for displaying a selection screen to select a device from among said selected devices.

11. (previously presented) A method of recognizing a plurality of digital signal processing devices connected to a digital broadcast receiving apparatus through a digital interface, comprising:

selecting a predetermined number of devices from among the plurality of digital signal processing devices connected to the digital interface; and

registering said selected devices,

said registering step including allocating a unique node identification number to each of said selected devices and,

for each of said selected devices, storing a record of said selected device and said unique node identification number for said selected device regardless of whether said selected device remains connected to the digital interface.

12. (canceled)

13. (previously presented) A method according to claim 11, wherein said registering step further includes confirming whether a device connected to the digital interface has already been associated with a unique node identification number.

14. (previously presented) A method according to claim 11, wherein said registering step further includes automatically allocating the same unique node identification numbers to said selected devices when said selected devices are reconnected to said digital interface.

15. (previously presented) A method according to claim 11, wherein said registering step further includes determining said unique node identification number allocated to said selected device based on a user input.

16. (previously presented) A method according to claim 11, wherein said registering step further includes prohibiting cancellation of said stored records.

17. (previously presented) A method according to claim 11, further comprising displaying a list of digital signal devices connected to said digital interface.

18. (previously presented) A method according to claim 17, wherein said displaying step includes visually discriminating between selected devices connected to the digital interface and selected devices not connected to the digital interface.

19. (previously presented) A method according to claim 17, wherein said displaying step further includes generating a predetermined warning display when a change is made to said record of a device in which a program recording reservation has been set or a node identification number has been allocated.

20. (previously presented) A method according to claim 11, further comprising displaying a selection screen that allows selection of devices from among said selected devices.

REMARKS

The present communication is responsive to the Office Action mailed May 26, 2010. Claims 1, 3-11, and 13-20 remain pending. Applicants respectfully submit that the claims are in condition for allowance, and request that the rejections of these claims be withdrawn.

Applicants thank the Examiner for granting a telephonic interview with Applicants' counsel on August 24, 2010. During the interview, the Examiner explained his broad interpretation of "storing a record of said device," and suggested that Applicants more clearly define this limitation by pointing to specific disclosure in the specification. The Examiner further indicated that an explanation of such specific disclosure could overcome the rejection. Accordingly, Applicants provide the remarks below.

Claims 1, 3-8, 10-11, 13-18, and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over EP Patent No. 0853402 to Yoshino et al. ("*Yoshino*") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,764,930 to Staats ("*Staats*"). Claims 9 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Yoshino* in view of *Staats* and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 6,507,953 to Horlander ("*Horlander*").

Claim 1 was previously amended to recite "said register storing a record of said selected device and said unique node identification number allocated to said selected device." The Examiner argues that Staats' disclosure of a node reference ID being maintained after bus reset is equivalent not only to the "unique node identification number" of claim 1, but also to the "record of said selected device." (5/26/10 Office Action, ¶1, p.2). This argument contradicts the decision of the Board, which distinguished maintaining a record of the device from maintaining a record of the unique node ID numbers. (1/20/10 Decision on Appeal, p.6). In particular, the decision

indicated that Staats' only disclosed maintaining a record of the node reference IDs, which were equated to the unique node ID Numbers of claim 1, and did not disclose maintaining a record of the device. (*Id.*, at pp. 6-7).

The specification also supports a distinction between storing a record of the device and storing a record of the unique node ID numbers. At least one example of this distinction is:

"If the equipment having the same number as that of the connected equipment cannot be found out among the registered equipment, the number and the equipment name are newly registered (step S7). This equipment name is brightly displayed (step S8).

If the equipment having the same number as that of the connected equipment exists among the registered equipment, the name of the registered equipment is allocated (step S9). This equipment name is brightly displayed (step S8).

As shown in Fig. 8B, when the connected equipment is disconnected from the bus of IEEE1394 and enters a non-connecting state, the equipment name is darkly displayed (step S10)." (*Specification*, p. 17, line 20 - p. 18, line 7).

According to the above excerpt from the specification, not only are the unique ID numbers of the nodes maintained after equipment is disconnected and reconnected, but the names of the equipment are also maintained. Further examples distinguishing maintaining a record of the device and maintaining a record of the unique node ID numbers may be found at least at p. 14, lines 19-27, p. 16, lines 6-22, p. 17, lines 15-24, and p. 23, lines 17-23.

Staats fails to teach anything in the way of maintaining a record of a selected device as recited in claim 1. Staats' disclosure of maintaining a record of the node reference ID is merely that - Staats maintains a record of the node

reference ID and nothing more. Interpreting Staats as teaching anything more would contradict the decision of the Board. Moreover, neither Yoshino nor Horlander cure this deficiency.

For at least the reasons discussed above, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is patentable over Yoshino, Staats, and Horlander, taken alone or in combination. For at least the reason that claims 3-10 depend from and therefore include the limitations of claim 1, Applicants further submit that claims 3-10 are also patentable. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections of claims 1 and 3-10 be withdrawn.

Independent claim 11 was previously amended similarly to claim 1, and as such recites "for each of said selected devices, storing a record of said selected device and said unique node identification number." Accordingly, for at least the reasons discussed above in connection with claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 11 is also patentable. Further, for at least the reason that claims 13-20 depend from and therefore include the limitations of claim 11, Applicants submit that claims 13-20 are also patentable. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections of claims 11 and 13-20 also be withdrawn.

As it is believed that all of the rejections set forth in the Official Action have been fully met, favorable reconsideration and allowance are earnestly solicited. If, however, for any reason the Examiner does not believe that such action can be taken at this time, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner telephone Applicants' attorney at (908) 654-5000 in order to overcome any additional objections which he might have.

If there are any additional charges in connection with this requested amendment, the Examiner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 12-1095 therefor.

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Respectfully submitted,
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